

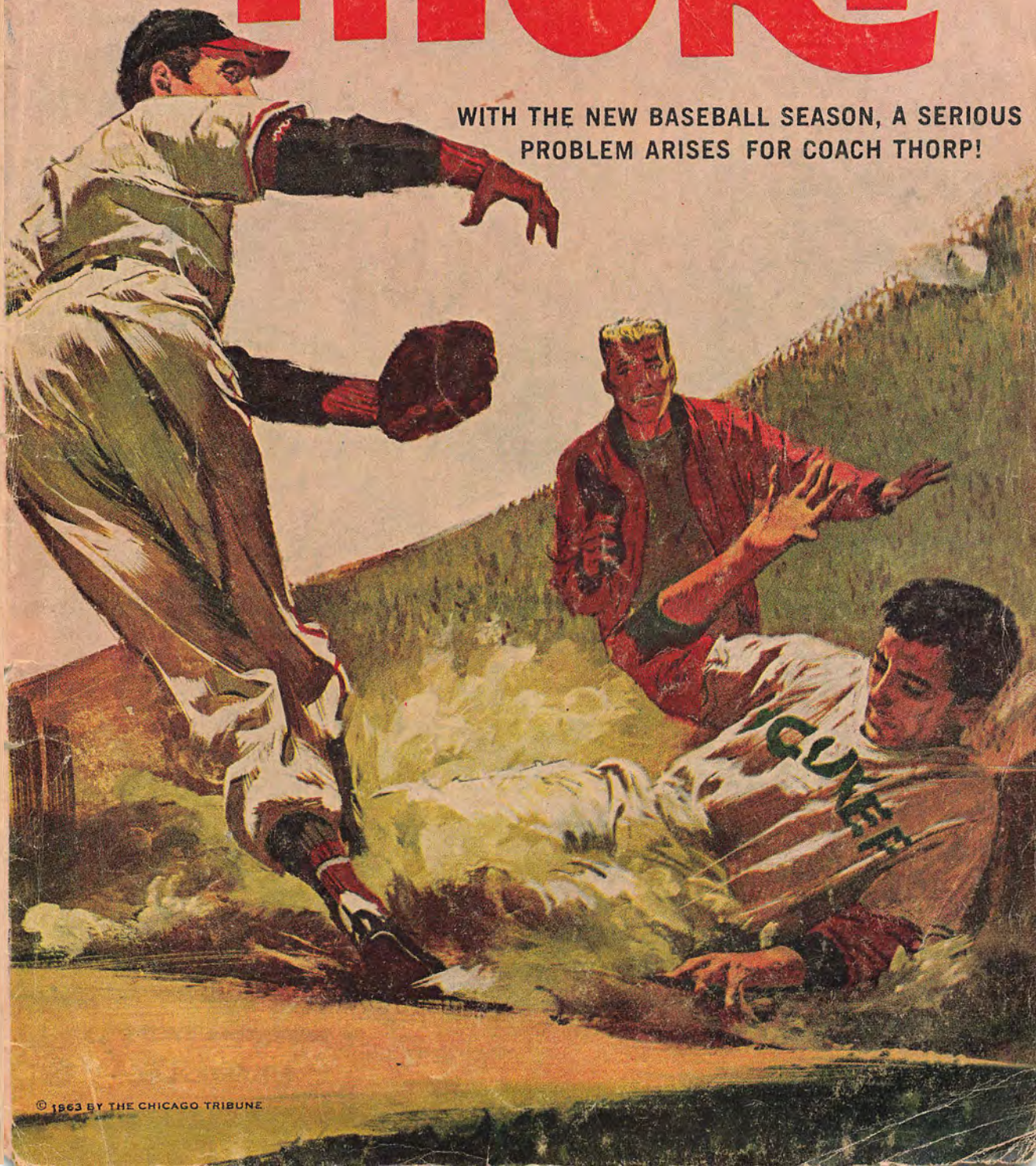
DELL®
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MAY-JULY

GIL THORP

WITH THE NEW BASEBALL SEASON, A SERIOUS
PROBLEM ARISES FOR COACH THORP!



BASEBALL RECORDS

BASEBALL IS A GAME OF RECORDS MADE AND BROKEN. WITNESS THESE SUPERLATIVES. THE LIFETIME BATTING LEADER IS TY COBB WITH A BATTING AVERAGE OF .357. HE LED THE LEAGUE 12 TIMES, MADE 4191 HITS DURING HIS CAREER, AVERAGING .300 OR BETTER OVER A 23 YEAR PERIOD. THE SEASON RECORD AVERAGE IS .438 BY HUGH DUFFY OF BOSTON. THE MOST RUNS SCORED IN A GAME: 7 BY GUY HACKER. THE MOST RUNS BATTED IN: 12 BY JIM BOTTOMLEY. MOST BASE HITS IN A SINGLE SEASON: 257 BY GEORGE SISLER. CONSECUTIVE GAME HITTING STREAK: 56 BY JOE DIMAGGIO. LIFETIME RECORD OF LONG HITS IS 1356 BY BABE RUTH. MOST HOMERS IN 154 GAMES: 60 BY BABE RUTH. MOST HOMERS IN 162 GAMES: ROGER MARIS...61. LONGEST MEASURED HOME RUN: 565 FEET BY MICKEY MANTLE AT GRIFFITH STADIUM, WASHINGTON, D.C. CY YOUNG PITCHED IN THE MOST GAMES: 906. MOST IN A SINGLE SEASON: 75 BY WILLIAM WHITE OF CINCINNATI IN 1879. MOST SHUTOUTS: 113 BY WALTER JOHNSON. THE SEASON RECORD FOR SHUTOUTS IS 16 BY GROVER CLEVELAND ALEXANDER. MODERN RECORD FOR MOST STRIKEOUTS IN A SINGLE GAME: BOB FELLER, 18. MOST STRIKEOUTS PER SEASON: SANDY KOUFOX, 269. AND WHO WAS THE YOUNGEST MAJOR LEAGUE PLAYER OF ALL TIME? JOE NUXHALL. HE STARTED HIS CAREER ON JUNE 10th, 1944... AGED 15 YEARS, 10 MONTHS AND 11 DAYS.



WHEN THE COACH OF MILFORD HIGH'S BASEBALL TEAM SUDDENLY RESIGNS GIL THORP IS ASKED TO TAKE OVER. THE ASSIGNMENT IS A TOUGH ONE...

GIL THORP



I KNOW IT'S ASKING A LOT OF YOU, GIL. THAT TEAM IS LOYAL TO MCGUIRE AND THEY'LL PROBABLY RESENT A NEW COACH, BUT I KNOW YOU CAN DO THE JOB.

I APPRECIATE YOUR CONFIDENCE MR. MOORE. I'LL DO MY BEST FOR THE SCHOOL.



AS PRINCIPAL OF MILFORD IT'S MY DUTY TO APPOINT THE BEST NEW COACH I CAN. THAT MAN IS GIL THORP. I KNOW YOU'LL GIVE HIM YOUR BEST AS YOU DID FOR COACH MCGUIRE.

NOBODY WILL EVER TAKE MCGUIRE'S PLACE WITH THIS TEAM...!



GIL THORP, No. 1, May-July 1963. Published quarterly by Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 750 Third Avenue, New York 17, N.Y. Helen Meyer, President; William F. Callahan, Jr., Executive Vice-President; Harold Clark, Vice-President-Advertising Director. Single copy price 12¢. All rights reserved throughout the world. The events contained herein are fictional and any resemblance to any person, living or dead, is purely coincidental. Authorized edition. Printed in U.S.A. Designed and produced by Dell Publishing Co., Inc. © Copyright 1963 The Chicago Tribune.

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A FEW DAYS LATER, GIL CALLS A HALT TO THE REGULAR AFTERNOON WORKOUT.

EVERYBODY INTO THE LOCKER ROOM. I'VE GOT A FEW THINGS TO SAY.

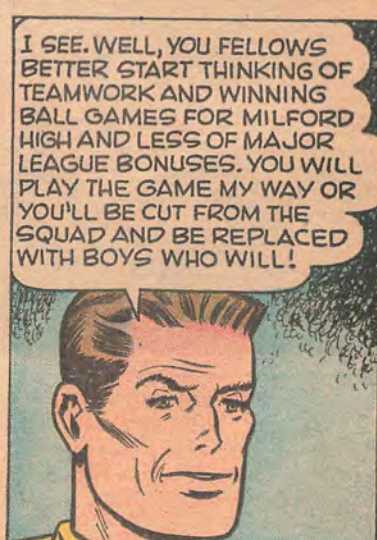


I'VE BEEN STUDYING THIS TEAM FOR THE LAST FEW DAYS DURING WORKOUTS AND I'M DISTURBED BY WHAT I SAW. NO HUSTLE, NO TEAM-WORK... IT'S EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF. AT BAT YOU ALL SWING FOR THE FENCES.



DIDN'T ANY OF YOU EVER HEAR OF PLACING THE BALL, HIT AND RUN, BUNTING?

THE BIG LEAGUE SCOUTS LOOK FOR HOME RUN HITTERS. THEY'RE THE BOYS WHO GET THE BIG BONUSES.



I SEE. WELL, YOU FELLOWS BETTER START THINKING OF TEAMWORK AND WINNING BALL GAMES FOR MILFORD HIGH AND LESS OF MAJOR LEAGUE BONUSES. YOU WILL PLAY THE GAME MY WAY OR YOU'LL BE CUT FROM THE SQUAD AND BE REPLACED WITH BOYS WHO WILL!



THAT NEW COACH IS CRAZY IF HE THINKS I'M GOING TO START BUNTING. HOME RUNS PAY OFF.

HE WON'T WIN GAMES WITHOUT PLAYERS.



AND ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LOCKERS...

IF HE GETS TOUGH WITH US HE WON'T HAVE A TEAM.

I'M AFRAID THERE'S GOING TO BE TROUBLE, GIL.

I KNOW, FRED. IT WAS BOUND TO COME. THIS IS A VETERAN TEAM. THEY RESIST A NEW COACH TELLING THEM TO CHANGE THEIR STYLE.

THE NEXT DAY DURING
FIELDING PRACTICE...



OKAY, BURWELL!
GET TWO!



AFTER PRACTICE...

I WANT TO TALK TO YOU, BOB.
YOU DIDN'T SHOW MUCH SPEED
OUT THERE TODAY. YOU LOOK A
LITTLE SLOW TO BE A
SHORTSTOP.

I MISSED A
COUPLE... SO
WHAT?
EVERYBODY
HAS A BAD
DAY NOW AND
THEN



I WANT TO SWITCH YOU TO THIRD BASE
WHERE YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO COVER SO
MUCH GROUND. SMITTY COULD PLAY SHORT
AND WE NEED THE SPEED.

I'M A SHORTSTOP.
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A
SHORTSTOP THAT'S WHERE
I WANT TO PLAY.



THE NEXT MORNING, GIL RECEIVES
A SUMMONS TO THE PRINCIPAL'S
OFFICE...



I'VE HAD A COMPLAINT FROM
THE FATHER OF ONE OF
YOUR PLAYERS.

BOB BURWELL'S
FATHER?



THAT'S RIGHT! MR. BURWELL IS
A VERY IMPORTANT MAN, ACTIVE
IN POLITICS AND A MEMBER OF
THE SCHOOL BOARD.

WHAT'S
ON HIS
MIND?



SEEMS HE FEELS YOU ARE BEING UNDULY
HARSH WITH HIS BOY. I TOLD HIM I WAS
SURE YOU WEREN'T.

I SWITCHED THE BOY
FROM SHORTSTOP TO THIRD
BASE. FOR THE GOOD OF
THE TEAM.



MR. BURWELL WANTS TO TALK
TO YOU...AT HIS HOME. SEE
HIM. TRY TO MAKE HIM
UNDERSTAND.

AND IF HE
REFUSES TO
UNDERSTAND?



WE'LL FACE THAT
PROBLEM WHEN
WE GET TO IT.

YES,
SIR.



AT THE BURWELL HOME, GIL IS GREETED BY A PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN...

I'M GIL THORP. MR. BURWELL IS EXPECTING ME.

OH, YES, MR. THORP. WON'T YOU COME IN? I'M KATHY BURWELL, BOB'S SISTER.

I'LL TELL MY FATHER YOU'RE HERE, MR. THORP.

THANK YOU.

GIL THORP IS HERE, DAD. WHY DIDN'T BOB TELL ME HIS COACH WAS SO GOOD LOOKING?

ENOUGH OF THAT NONSENSE. I'M GOING TO STRAIGHTEN OUT THAT YOUNG MAN.

NOW, DADDY, DON'T YOU BE MEAN TO HIM. I LIKE HIM AND I WANT HIM TO COME BACK, BUT NEXT TIME TO SEE ME.

WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT. NOW, I WANT TO TALK TO HIM ALONE.

MY FATHER, MR. THORP. DON'T LET HIM FRIGHTEN YOU. HE'S REALLY A DARLING. I'LL LEAVE YOU TWO NOW. I HOPE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, SOON, MR. THORP.

YOU'RE VERY KIND, MISS BURWELL.

COME IN... COME IN...!

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, MR. BURWELL?

IT'S THE OTHER WAY AROUND, THORP. I'M GOING TO SAVE YOUR CAREER AS A COACH, IF YOU DO AS I TELL YOU. OTHERWISE, YOU WON'T FIND A TEAM TO COACH ANYWHERE IN THIS SECTION OF THE COUNTRY!



MY SON, BOB, INFORMS ME YOU PLAN ON SWITCHING HIM FROM SHORTSTOP TO THIRD BASE.

THAT'S RIGHT.



WELL, YOU CAN JUST CHANGE YOUR PLANS AGAIN. BOB'S A SHORTSTOP. YOU WILL CONTINUE PLAYING HIM AT THAT POSITION.



MR. BURWELL, YOUR SON ISN'T A SHORTSTOP. HE DOESN'T COVER ENOUGH GROUND. AT THIRD HE'LL BE MORE VALUABLE TO THE TEAM.

VALUE BE HANGED!

I'VE GOT PLANS OF MY OWN FOR BOB AND THEY START WITH HIS BEING A SHORTSTOP.



WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO YOU THAT HE PLAY SHORT?

THORP, I WAS A BALLPLAYER MYSELF. PLAYED IN THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION AS A SHORTSTOP... I NEVER MADE THE MAJOR LEAGUES. COULDN'T HIT WELL ENOUGH. BOB CAN. AND HE'S GOING TO MAKE IT AT SHORT. ALREADY SCOUTS HAVE BEEN MAKING INQUIRIES!



I APPRECIATE YOUR FEELINGS, SIR. BUT, I HAVE TO DO WHAT'S BEST FOR THE TEAM. BOB WILL ACTUALLY BE A BETTER BALL-PLAYER AT THIRD.

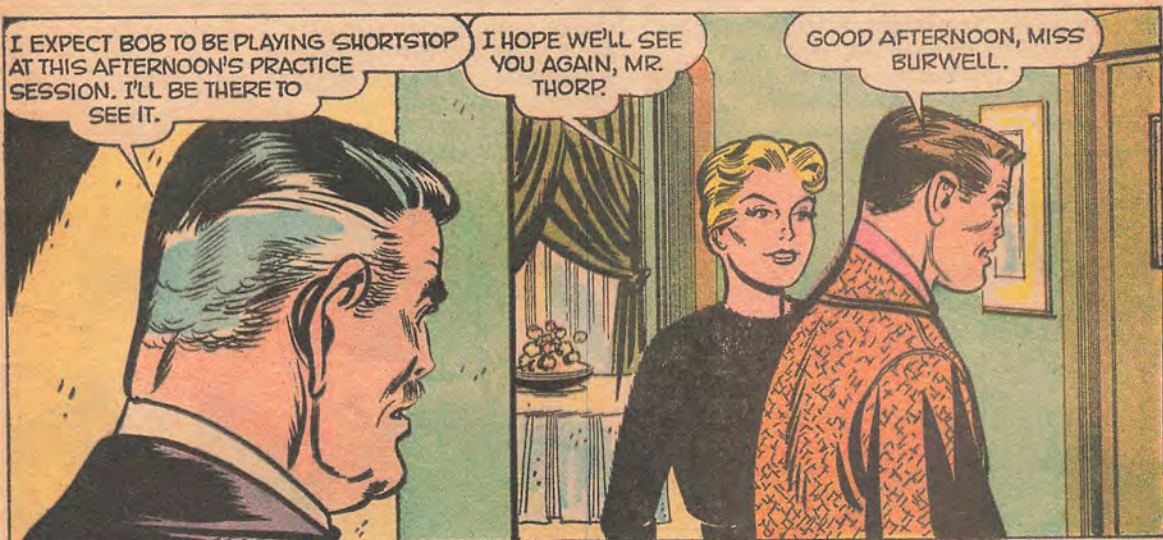
NO! THE SHORT-STOP IS THE MOST IMPORTANT MAN IN THE INFIELD.

HE'LL GET THE BIGGEST BONUS.



SO THAT'S IT! YOU'RE CONCERNED ONLY WITH GETTING A BIG BONUS FOR BOB TO SIGN A MAJOR LEAGUE CONTRACT. YOU DON'T CARE ANYTHING ABOUT MILFORD HIGH.

THAT'S IT EXACTLY! AND I DON'T INTEND FOR ANYBODY TO STAND IN MY WAY.



ON THE FOLLOWING DAY, BOB BURWELL'S FATHER IS WITH DR. MOORE, THE PRINCIPAL.

I ASKED THORP TO BE PRESENT, MR. BURWELL, SINCE THIS OBVIOUSLY CONCERNS HIM.

YOU BET IT DOES. I'LL BE BRIEF AND TO THE POINT. THORP IS RUINING MY SON'S CHANCES FOR A BIG LEAGUE CAREER. I DEMAND HE BE REPLACED AS COACH OF THE MILFORD HIGH TEAM.



MR. BURWELL, YOU FORGET YOURSELF. I AM THE PRINCIPAL OF MILFORD HIGH AND I WILL DECIDE WHO COACHES ITS TEAMS. GIL THORP, IN MY OPINION, IS MORE QUALIFIED TO DO SO.



MIGHT I REMIND YOU THAT I AM A MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL BOARD, AND IT IS THE SCHOOL BOARD THAT HIRES AND FIRES THE PRINCIPAL OF MILFORD HIGH.

THAT'S A RISK I'LL HAVE TO TAKE.



YOU'LL BOTH BE SORRY THAT YOU STARTED THIS WITH ME.



SORRY I GOT YOU INTO THIS, DR. MOORE.

NONSENSE! YOU'VE ONLY DONE WHAT YOU BELIEVE IS BEST, AND SO HAVE I.



THAT EVENING
IN THE
BURWELL
HOME...

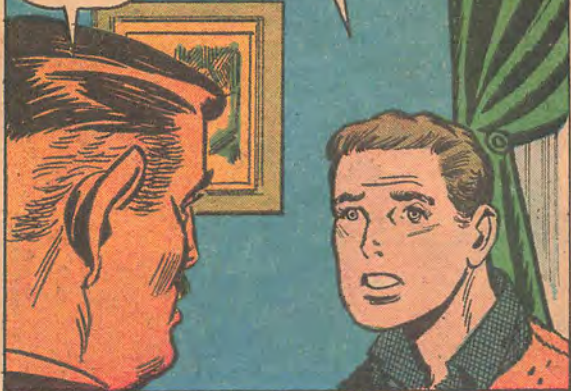
AND THAT'S THE WHOLE STORY,
SON. I'M ASKING FOR A SPECIAL
MEETING OF THE SCHOOL BOARD.
WE'LL GET RID OF THIS TROUBLE-
MAKER, THORP, AND TEACH DR.
MOORE A LESSON AT THE SAME TIME.

DAD,
I'D RATHER YOU WOULD
NOT DO THAT.



WHY NOT?
YOU WANT TO
PLAY SHORT,
DON'T YOU?
WIN A BIG
BONUS?

OF COURSE. BUT, I'VE GOT TO
PLAY ON THE TEAM. IF THEY
ALL THOUGHT I HAD THE COACH
FIRED, IT WOULDN'T EXACTLY
MAKE ME A HERO.



I THOUGHT
YOU SAID
MOST OF THE
BOYS
RESENTED
THORP.

THEY DO. THIS IS A VETERAN
TEAM AND WE ALL THOUGHT
WE WERE PRETTY HOT STUFF.
WHEN COACH THORP STARTED
CRITICIZING US AND MAKING
CHANGES, THE BOYS DIDN'T
LIKE IT. BUT, GETTING THE
COACH FIRED WOULDN'T
BE RIGHT.



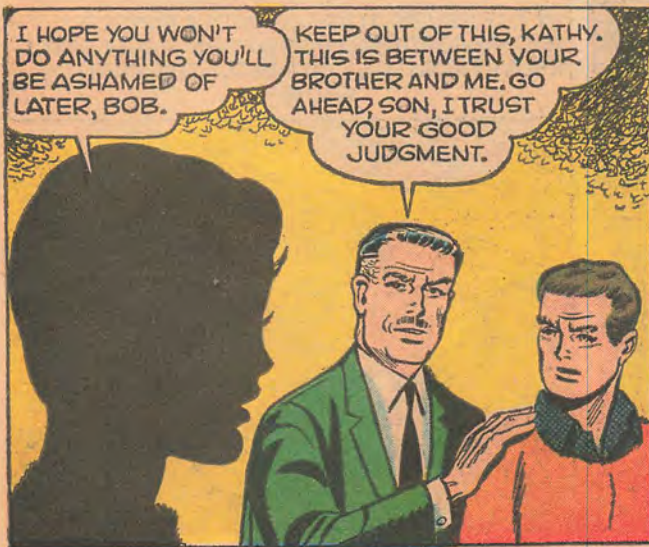
WHAT DO
YOU WANT
ME TO
DO?

NOTHING. I'LL DO IT. I HAVE
A PLAN THAT SHOULD
WORK.



I HOPE YOU WON'T
DO ANYTHING YOU'LL
BE ASHAMED OF
LATER, BOB.

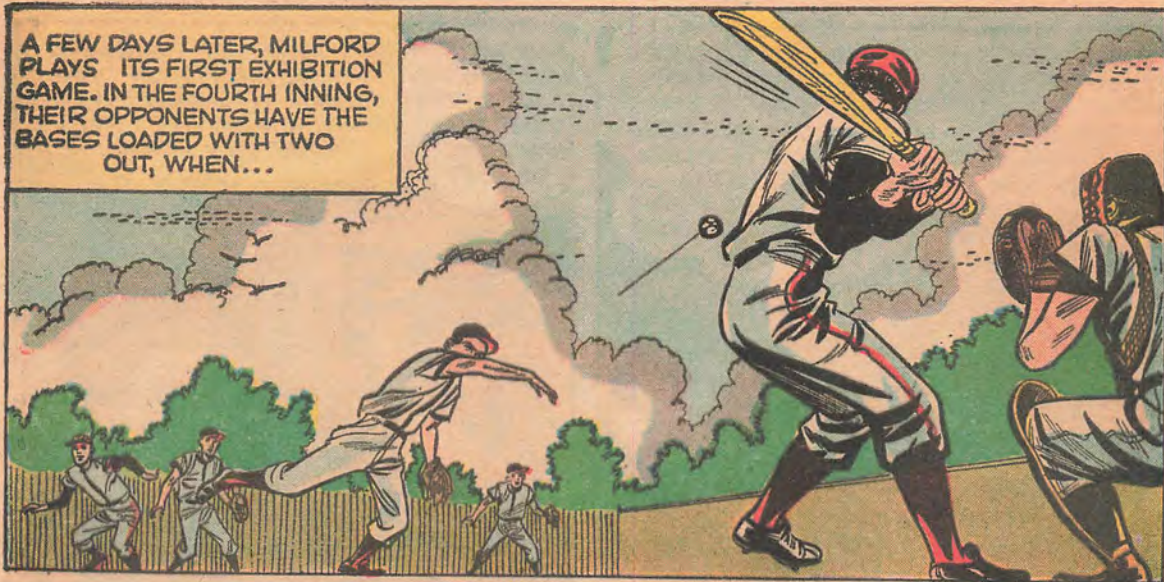
KEEP OUT OF THIS, KATHY.
THIS IS BETWEEN YOUR
BROTHER AND ME. GO
AHEAD, SON, I TRUST
YOUR GOOD
JUDGMENT.



WELL, I THINK IT'S TERRIBLE
OF YOU TO TREAT GIL THORP
THIS WAY. I'M ASHAMED
OF YOU BOTH.



A FEW DAYS LATER, MILFORD PLAYS ITS FIRST EXHIBITION GAME. IN THE FOURTH INNING, THEIR OPPONENTS HAVE THE BASES LOADED WITH TWO OUT, WHEN...



...THE BATTER HITS A WICKED BOUNCER TOWARD THIRD. BOB BURWELL MOVES IN FRONT OF IT AND...



...BOB GOOFS IT. THE BALL BOUNCES BEHIND HIM AND TWO RUNS CROSS THE PLATE...



AT LAST THE INNING IS OVER.

TOUGH LUCK, BOB. THAT WAS A ROUGH ONE TO FIELD. YOU'LL MAKE UP FOR IT. SURE.



IN THE SEVENTH INNING WITH A RUNNER RACING FOR THIRD, BOB DROPS A PERFECT RELAY FROM THE OUTFIELD... THE RUNNER SCORES.



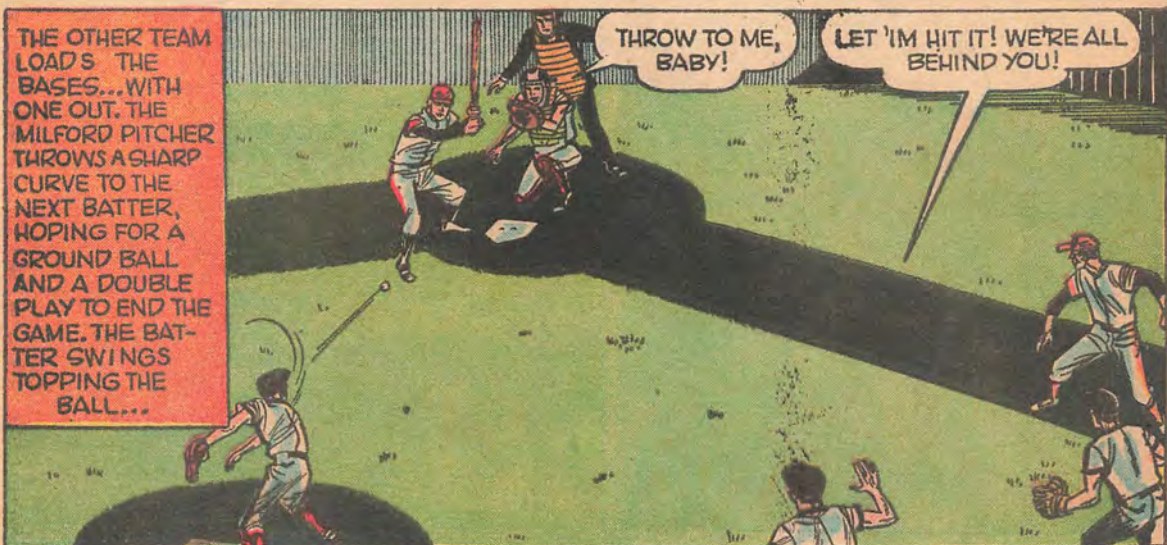
WHEN HE COMES TO BAT IN THE EIGHTH INNING WITH A CHANCE TO PUT MILFORD AHEAD, BOB STRIKES OUT....



ALL RIGHT, BOYS. HOLD THEM THIS INNING, WE'VE STILL GOT A ONE RUN LEAD.



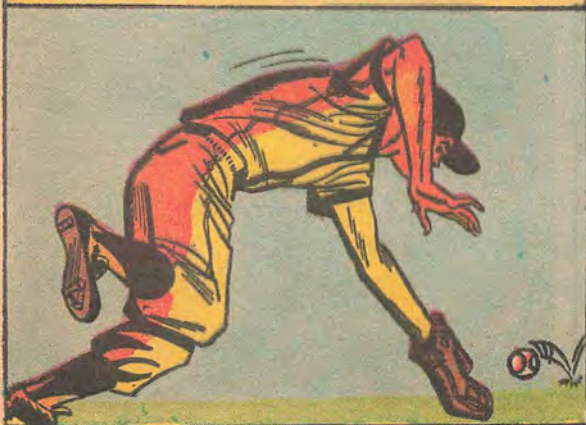
THE OTHER TEAM LOADS THE BASES... WITH ONE OUT. THE MILFORD PITCHER THROWS A SHARP CURVE TO THE NEXT BATTER, HOPING FOR A GROUND BALL AND A DOUBLE PLAY TO END THE GAME. THE BATTER SWINGS TOPPING THE BALL...



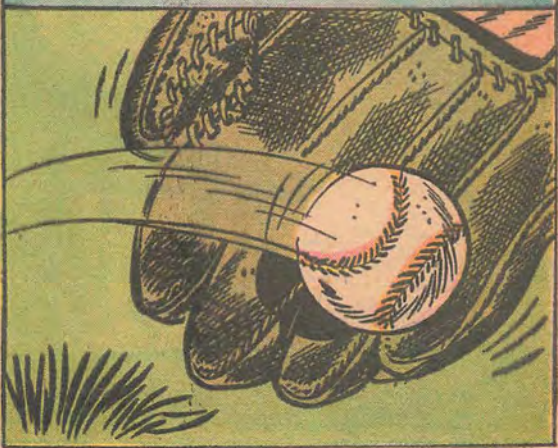
THROW TO ME, BABY!

LET 'IM HIT IT! WE'RE ALL BEHIND YOU!

THE BALL DRIBBLES TOWARD THIRD. BOB CHARGES. IT IS A PERFECT THIRD TO HOME TO FIRST DOUBLE PLAY BALL. BOB REACHES FOR IT AND...



...MISSES!! THE TYING AND WINNING RUNS CROSS THE PLATE. THE GAME IS OVER. MILFORD HAS LOST...



AFTER THE GAME, GIL, LOST IN THOUGHT, WALKS HOME SLOWLY, TRYING TO SOLVE THE PUZZLE OF WHY THE TEAM HADN'T JELLED.

HI, THERE, COACH!

HELLO, MISS BURWELL. NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

CAN I GIVE YOU A LIFT?

OH, I'M JUST TRYING TO WALK OUT THE COBWEBS AND SOLVE SOME PROBLEMS.

PERHAPS YOU'LL DO BETTER SITTING DOWN. HOP IN.

HOW DID THE TEAM DO TODAY?

WE LOST IN THE NINTH. BUT MORE IMPORTANT, THE BOYS SEEM SLUGGISH... NOT HUSTLING. I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WRONG.

HOW DID MY KID BROTHER DO?

HE HAD A BAD DAY. HE MADE THREE ERRORS AND IT'S AFFECTING HIS HITTING. I MAY HAVE MADE A MISTAKE SWITCHING BOB TO THIRD. THE PRESSURE MAY BE TOO MUCH FOR HIM.

I'LL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING SOON. THE SEASON OPENS NEXT WEEK.

I'M SURE THINGS WILL WORK OUT FOR YOU, GIL. AT LEAST I'M GOING TO DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO HELP.

AND THAT NIGHT... WHAT YOU'RE DOING TO GIL THORP IS UNFORGIVABLE, BOB. THAT MAN IS WORRIED THAT HE PUT TOO MUCH PRESSURE ON YOU AND THAT'S WHY YOU'RE MAKING ERRORS. YOU'RE MAKING ERRORS ON PURPOSE.

YOU KEEP OUT OF THIS, KATHY.

MR. BURWELL JOINS THEM UNEXPECTEDLY...

WELL, WHAT'S THIS LITTLE MEETING ALL ABOUT?

IT'S ABOUT WHAT BOB IS DOING... MAKING ERRORS, NOT PLAYING HIS BEST. I DON'T THINK IT'S RIGHT.

I TOLD YOU TO KEEP OUT OF THIS, KATHY. BOB WILL DO WHAT I TELL HIM TO DO. BELIEVE ME, I KNOW WHAT'S BEST FOR HIM.

WELL, I WON'T BE A PARTY TO IT.

DO YOU THINK SHE'D TELL COACH THORP?

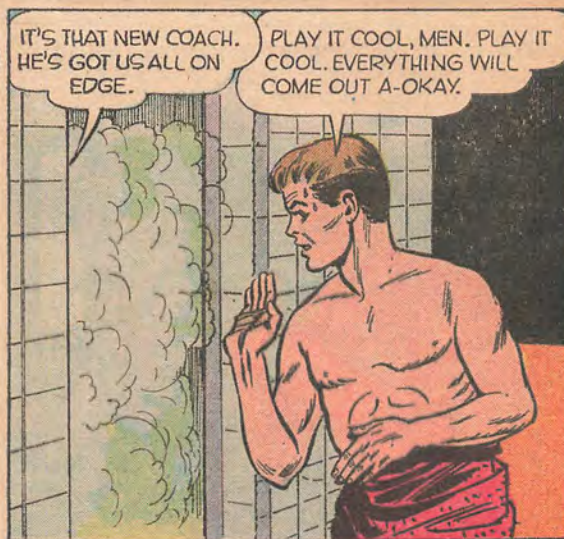
NOT YET, SHE WON'T. SHE'S STILL MY DAUGHTER AND YOUR SISTER. BUT SHE IS GETTING PRETTY MAD, SO THIS PLAN BETTER WORK SOON.

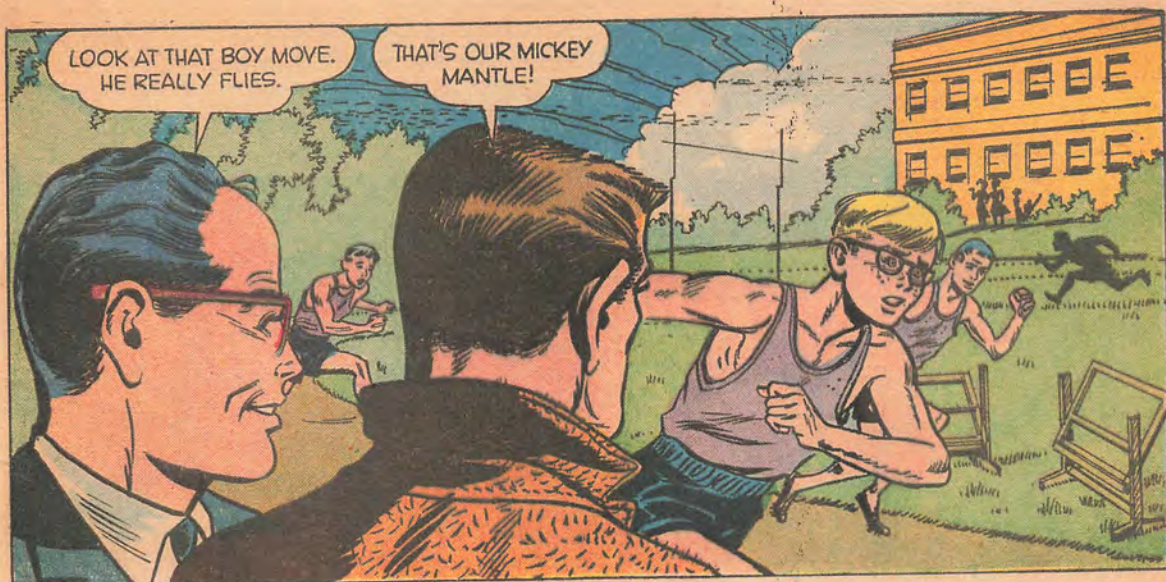
WHEN'S THE NEXT EXHIBITION GAME?

TOMORROW AFTERNOON.

YOU KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.

ONE MORE GAME SHOULD DO IT.





FRED IS RIGHT...THE PLAYERS DON'T LIKE IT AT ALL.

THIS NEW COACH DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT BASEBALL. CARTER CAN RUN FAST, BUT THAT'S ALL HE CAN DO.

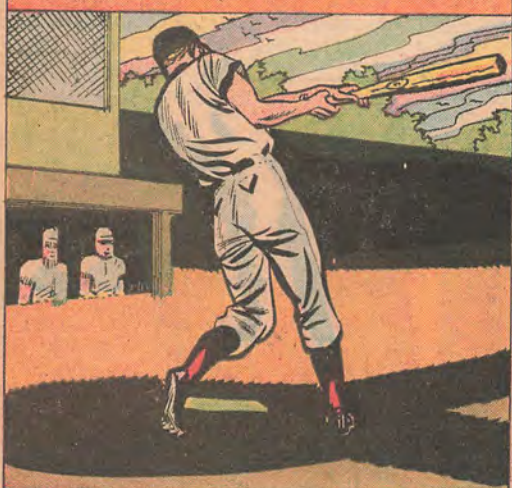
THAT'S RIGHT. HE'S NO BALL-PLAYER.



BUT CARTER SOON PROVES THE PLAYERS WRONG WITH HIS SPECTACULAR FIELDING FEATS AND...



... HIS UNCANNY ABILITY TO PLACE-HIT AND...



...WITH HIS GREAT SPEED AND SKILL IN BUNTING!

CARTER'S PRESENCE SEEMS TO BRING THE TEAM TO LIFE. THEY HUSTLE MORE, WORK HARDER, BUT BOB BURWELL STILL ISN'T PLAYING GOOD BALL. THE DAY BEFORE THE FIRST GAME, GIL CALLS THE TEAM TOGETHER.

TOMORROW WE PLAY OUR FIRST LEAGUE GAME. I THINK WE HAVE A CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM. THE OTHER COACHES THINK THE SAME OF THEIR TEAMS. THERE'S ONLY ONE PLACE TO FIND OUT WHO'S RIGHT AND THAT'S ON THE PLAYING FIELD. I KNOW YOU BOYS CAN DO IT. NOW, DON'T FORGET CURFEW. DURING THE SEASON, EVERYONE IS TO BE IN BED AT TEN. IT'S THE HONOR SYSTEM, SO IT'S UP TO YOU TO REPORT ANY VIOLATIONS TO ME. GOOD LUCK.



FEELING A LITTLE BETTER ABOUT THE WAY THE TEAM IS PLAYING, GIL FEELS LIKE CELEBRATING. HE ASKS KATHY BURWELL TO JOIN HIM.

I'M GLAD YOU WERE ABLE TO HAVE DINNER WITH ME.

IT'S MY PLEASURE. I'VE BEEN WONDERING IF YOU WERE EVER GOING TO ASK ME OUT.



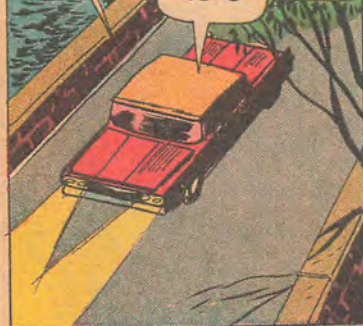
I HAD SUCH A LOVELY TIME, GIL. YOU'RE A VERY NICE MAN.

I ENJOYED MYSELF, TOO.



MUST YOU TAKE ME HOME, NOW? IT'S STILL EARLY. COULDN'T WE GO DANCING AWHILE?

OF COURSE, I KNOW A NICE PLACE, THE "GRAND CLUB!"



YOU'RE A VERY SMOOTH DANCER, GIL.

I'VE NEVER DANCED WITH ANY-ONE AS LIGHT ON HER FEET AS YOU ARE.



OH, LOOK, GIL. THERE'S BOB DOING THE TWIST. HE'S GOOD, ISN'T HE?

AT DANCING, YES. NOT AT OBEYING RULES. THERE'S A TEN O'CLOCK CURFEW FOR THE TEAM.



I STILL THINK WE SHOULD HAVE SPOKEN TO BOB.

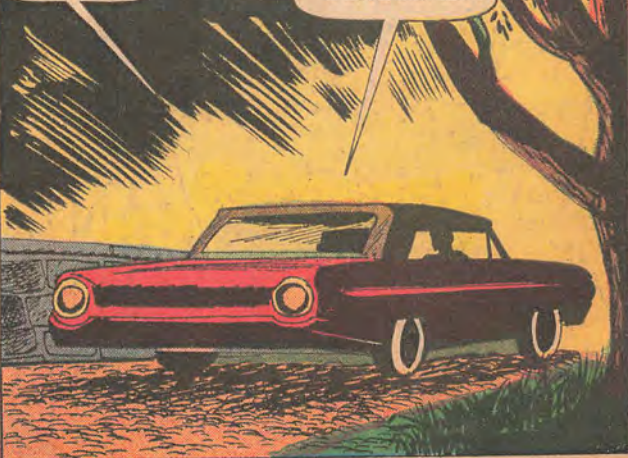
NO. THE TEAM OPERATES ON THE HONOR SYSTEM.

IT'S UP TO BOB TO REPORT HIMSELF.



AND IF HE DOESN'T...?

THEN I'LL ACT AS I THINK BEST FOR EVERYONE CONCERNED.





A FEW MINUTES LATER, BOB'S FATHER BURSTS INTO THE LOCKER ROOM, EXCITEDLY...

BOYS, I'VE GOT GREAT NEWS FOR ALL OF YOU. THE BIG PARADE HAS STARTED. THERE ARE THREE MAJOR LEAGUE SCOUTS IN THE STANDS TO LOOK YOU OVER. AND

THREE SCOUTS! BOY, I'LL BE SWINGING FOR THE FENCES ALL DAY! WHERE'S THAT HOME RUN BAT OF MINE? IT'S EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF!

THEY'RE ONLY THE BEGINNING. THEY WILL BE TROOPING DOWN HERE ALL SEASON LONG!



WELL, SON, IT'S UP TO YOU, NOW. SHOW THEM WHAT YOU CAN DO. WHERE I FAILED AS A BALL-PLAYER...I KNOW YOU CAN SUCCEED.

SURE, DAD. I'LL BE SWINGING ALL AFTERNOON!



HAS THORP SWITCHED YOU BACK TO SHORTSTOP YET?

NO, I'VE GOT TO BE CAREFUL. HE'S SUSPICIOUS THAT ALL THOSE ERRORS WEREN'T ACCIDENTAL.



MR. BURWELL, I'M BARRING YOU FROM THE LOCKER ROOM FROM NOW ON. YOU COME IN HERE TELLING THESE BOYS ABOUT SCOUTS AND URGING THEM TO FORGET EVERYTHING THEY EVER LEARNED ABOUT TEAM PLAY!

I DID NO SUCH THING!



RIGHT NOW EVERY BOY ON THIS TEAM IS DREAMING OF HITTING HOME RUNS...OF HIS PERSONAL BATTING AVERAGE. ALL THOUGHTS OF THE TEAM ARE OUT THE WINDOW. AND BOB IS NO EXCEPTION. HE REFUSES TO ACCEPT AUTHORITY...TO PLAY BY THE RULES...OR LIVE BY THEM. HE IS NOT TO BE TRUSTED, AND I HOLD YOU RESPONSIBLE!

I'LL HAVE YOUR JOB FOR THIS!



PERHAPS. BUT I'M DOING WHAT I KNOW TO BE RIGHT. BOB, YOU BROKE CURFEW LAST NIGHT AND FAILED TO REPORT YOURSELF...THEREBY VIOLATING THE TEAM HONOR SYSTEM. I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO SUSPEND YOU INDEFINITELY FROM THE SQUAD. GET OUT OF THAT UNIFORM!

YOU'LL NEVER GET AWAY WITH THIS!



I'LL SEE THE PRINCIPAL AND HAVE HIM FIRED ON THE SPOT. HE'LL NEVER COACH ANOTHER TEAM AT MILFORD HIGH! I'LL SEE TO THAT!

PLEASE, DAD, JUST LEAVE ME ALONE NOW...

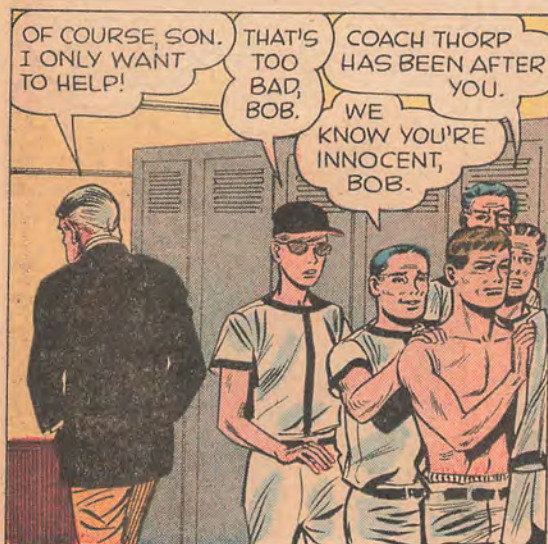


OF COURSE, SON. I ONLY WANT TO HELP!

THAT'S TOO BAD, BOB.

COACH THORP HAS BEEN AFTER YOU.

WE KNOW YOU'RE INNOCENT, BOB.



AT LAST IT IS TIME FOR THE TEAM TO TAKE THE FIELD... BOB STAYS BEHIND.



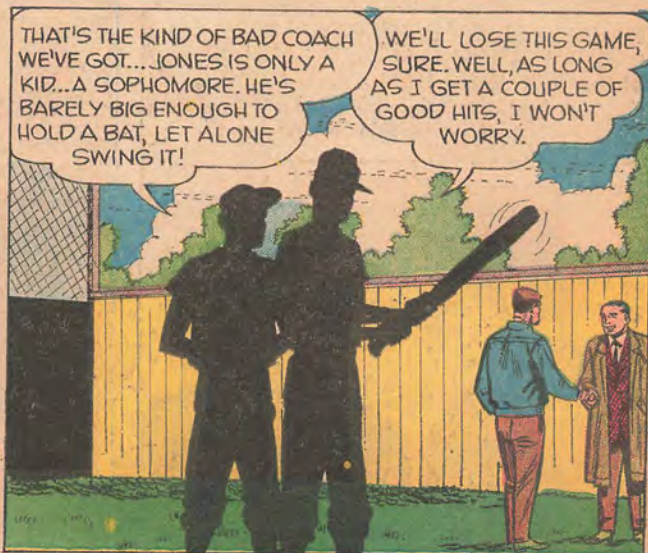
WHO'LL TAKE BOB'S PLACE, COACH?

TIPPY JONES WILL PLAY THIRD.

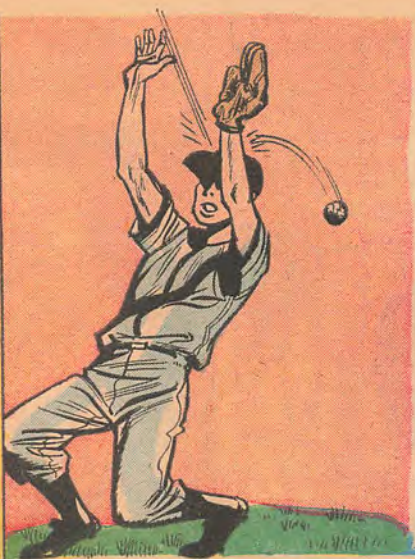


THAT'S THE KIND OF BAD COACH WE'VE GOT... JONES IS ONLY A KID...A SOPHOMORE. HE'S BARELY BIG ENOUGH TO HOLD A BAT, LET ALONE SWING IT!

WE'LL LOSE THIS GAME, SURE. WELL, AS LONG AS I GET A COUPLE OF GOOD HITS, I WON'T WORRY.



AS SO OFTEN HAPPENS, THE GAME SEEMS TO CENTER AROUND THE SUBSTITUTE AND TIPPY JONES IS TOO TENSE AND JITTERY TO BE UP TO THE TASK. HE FAILS TO CATCH A POP FLY RESULTING IN TWO RUNS! HE LETS GROUNDERS GET AWAY FOR TWO MORE RUNS.



AT BAT, TIPPY JONES STRIKES OUT EVERY TIME HE COMES UP.

STRIKE THREE!
YER OUT!



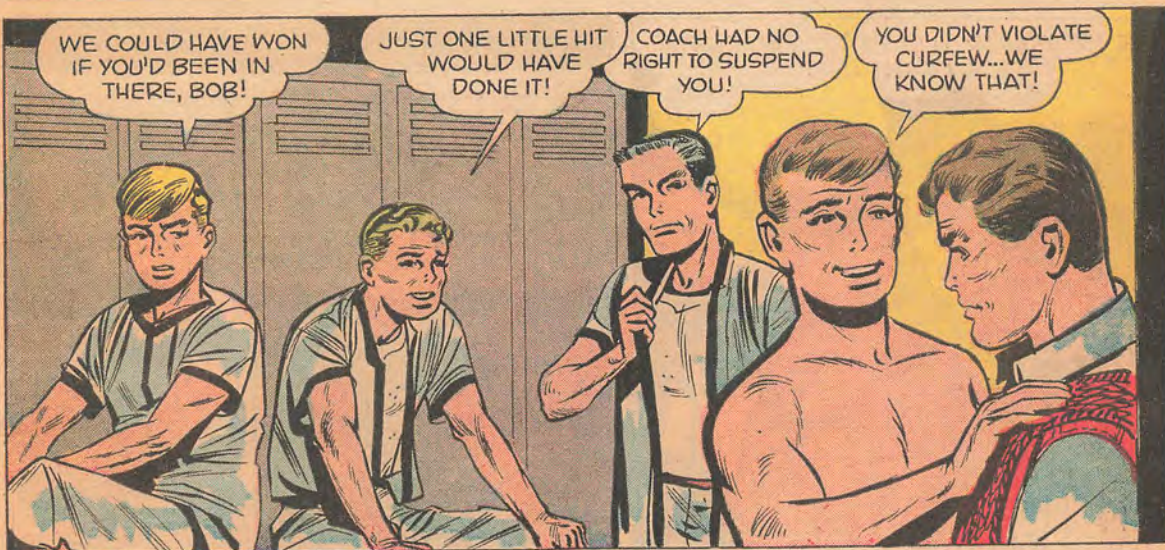
MILFORD HIGH HAD LOST!

WE COULD HAVE WON IF YOU'D BEEN IN THERE, BOB!

JUST ONE LITTLE HIT WOULD HAVE DONE IT!

COACH HAD NO RIGHT TO SUSPEND YOU!

YOU DIDN'T VIOLATE CURFEW...WE KNOW THAT!



MILFORD PLAYS FOUR MORE GAMES IN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS, WINNING ONE, LOSING THREE.

GIL, I'M WORRIED ABOUT BOB. ALL HE DOES IS SIT AROUND THE HOUSE AND SULK. AND MY FATHER IS FURIOUS WITH YOU. ALL HE CAN TALK ABOUT IS GETTING YOU FIRED. DR. MOORE WON'T FIRE YOU, BUT DAD HAS CALLED A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE SCHOOL BOARD.

IT IS UP TO BOB TO HELP HIMSELF. HE MUST TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS ACTS.



CAN'T YOU FORGIVE HIM?

THERE'S NOTHING TO FORGIVE. I'M NOT TRYING TO PUNISH HIM AS MUCH AS I'M TRYING TO TEACH HIM SOMETHING. IT SEEMS BOB LEARNS ONLY THE HARD WAY.



THE MORNING OF THE GAME WITH WEBSTER HIGH, THE TEAM SUMMONS BOB TO A MEETING...

WE WANTED YOU HERE, BOB, SO YOU'D KNOW WHAT WE PLANNED TO DO.

WHAT'S THAT?

THE MAJORITY OF US HAVE VOTED TO QUIT THE TEAM UNLESS THORP LIFTS THE SUSPENSION.

YOU MEAN STRIKE! WHY, IF YOU DID THAT, IT WOULD COST MILFORD ANY CHANCE AT THE PENNANT.



YES, AND IT WOULD ALSO COST COACH THORP HIS JOB.

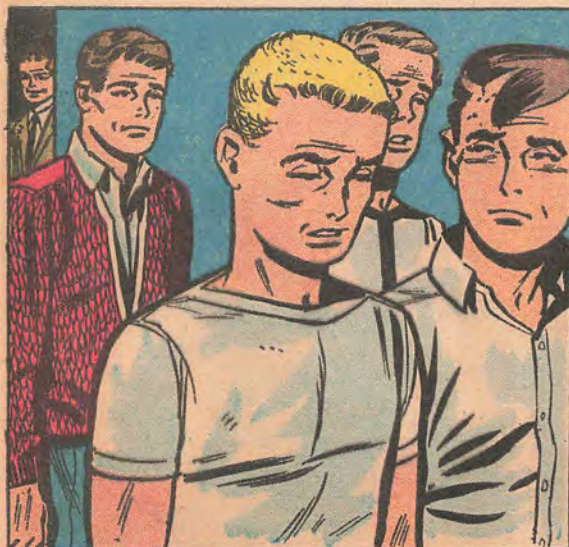
BUT YOU'D GET BACK ON THE TEAM AGAIN.

IT WOULD BE DIFFERENT IF YOU WERE GUILTY OF ANYTHING.



BOB IS SILENT FOR A MOMENT, HIS THOUGHTS RACING...

NO, I CAN'T LET YOU DO THIS. I **DID** BREAK CURFEW, AND THE HONOR SYSTEM. AND ALL THOSE ERRORS I MADE DURING THE EXHIBITION GAME WERE DELIBERATE. I WANTED TO PLAY SHORTSTOP AND LIKE A CHILD I WOULDN'T HAVE IT ANY WAY BUT MY OWN. I DESERVED EVERYTHING I GOT. BUT I LEARNED MY LESSON. WHAT MATTERS IS WHAT YOU GIVE **TO** A TEAM, NOT WHAT YOU **GET** FROM IT.



IT SEEMS TO ME THAT BOB BURWELL HAS LEARNED A VALUABLE LESSON. THE SUSPENSION IS LIFTED. FROM NOW ON THIS TEAM IS GOING TO WIN BALL-GAMES!

I'LL BE A GOOD THIRD BASEMAN IF I HAVE TO KNOCK BALLS DOWN WITH MY CHEST!



SPARKED BY BOB'S HITTING AND FIELDING, MILFORD HIGH EMBARKS ON A WINNING STREAK. A HOME RUN BY BOB IN EXTRA INNINGS WINS THE GAME AGAINST MILBURN AND GIVES THE TEAM THE LEAGUE LEAD.



GIL CELEBRATES WITH KATHY.

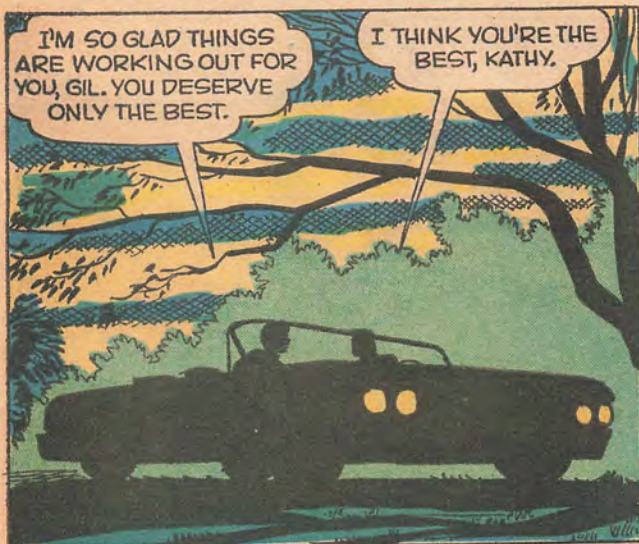
NOW THAT MILFORD'S LEADING THE LEAGUE, BOB'S WALKING ON AIR. OF COURSE, MY FATHER IS STILL ANGRY WITH YOU, GIL, SINCE NO BIG LEAGUE SCOUTS HAVE BEEN AROUND TO SEE HIM.

YOU CAN SET HIS MIND AT EASE. AN EVEN DOZEN OF THEM HAVE ASKED ME IF BOB WOULD BE INTERESTED IN PLAYING PROFESSIONAL BALL. WHEN THE SEASON IS OVER, YOUR FATHER WILL HAVE TO FIGHT THEM OFF.



I'M SO GLAD THINGS ARE WORKING OUT FOR YOU, GIL. YOU DESERVE ONLY THE BEST.

I THINK YOU'RE THE BEST, KATHY.



IT IS THE FINAL REGULAR SEASON GAME. MILFORD HAS TO WIN TO CLINCH THE PENNANT. IN THE EIGHTH INNING, WITH THE SCORE TIED AND TWO MEN ON BASE, THE BARTLETT HIGH BATTER PULLS ONE TOWARD LEFT FIELD. BOB DIVES FOR THE STREAKING BALL AND...



... HE CATCHES IT!



FROM A KNEELING POSITION, BOB THROWS.

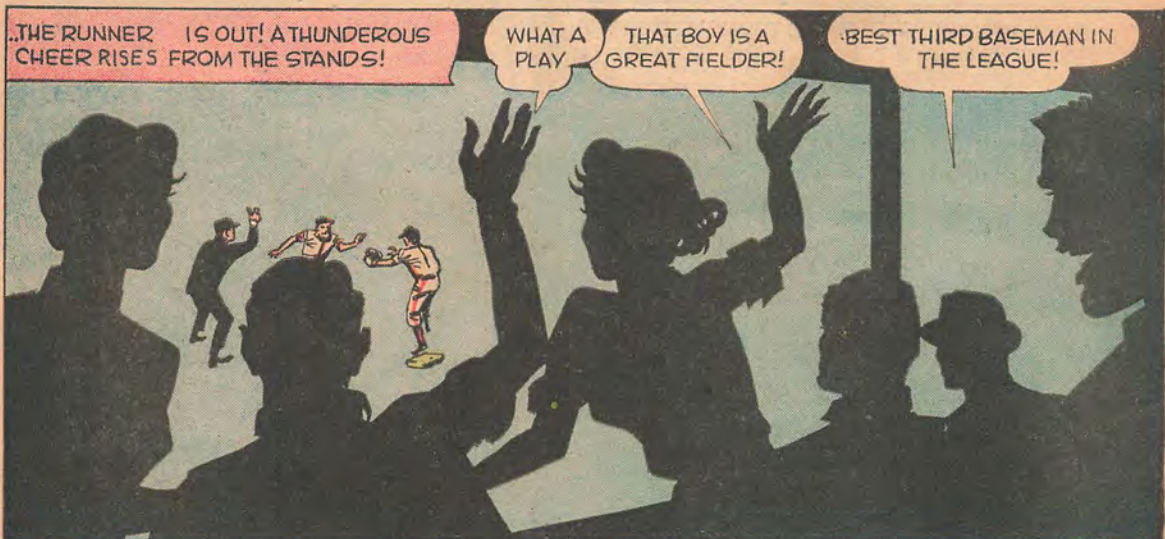


THE RUNNER IS OUT! A THUNDEROUS CHEER RISES FROM THE STANDS!

WHAT A PLAY

THAT BOY IS A GREAT FIELDER!

BEST THIRD BASEMAN IN THE LEAGUE!



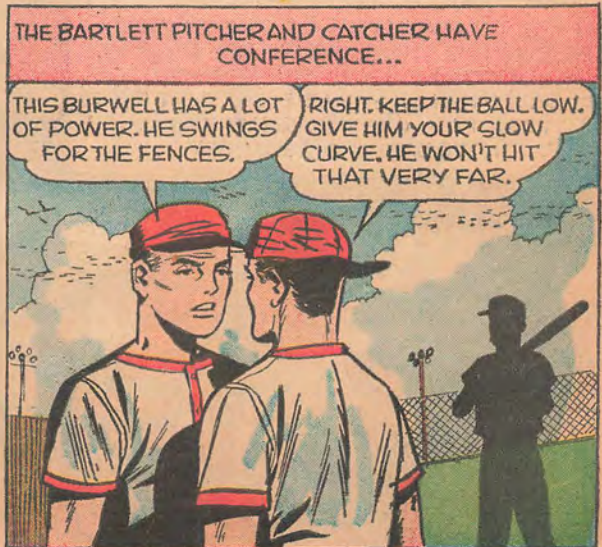
WITH TWO OUT IN THE LAST OF THE NINTH AND THE SCORE TIED, TIM CARTER TRIPLES WITH BOB UP NEXT. GIL WHISPERS INSTRUCTIONS.



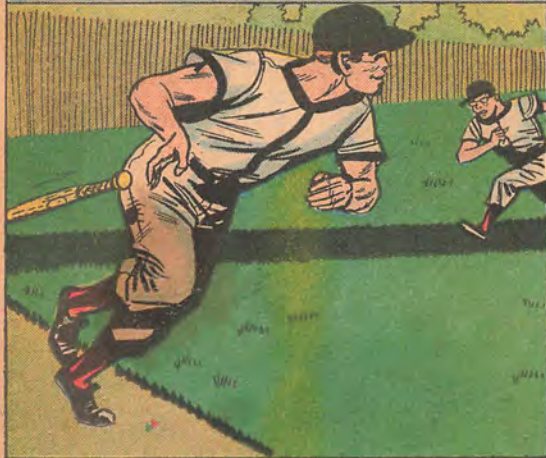
THE BARTLETT PITCHER AND CATCHER HAVE CONFERENCE...

THIS BURWELL HAS A LOT OF POWER. HE SWINGS FOR THE FENCES.

RIGHT. KEEP THE BALL LOW. GIVE HIM YOUR SLOW CURVE. HE WON'T HIT THAT VERY FAR.



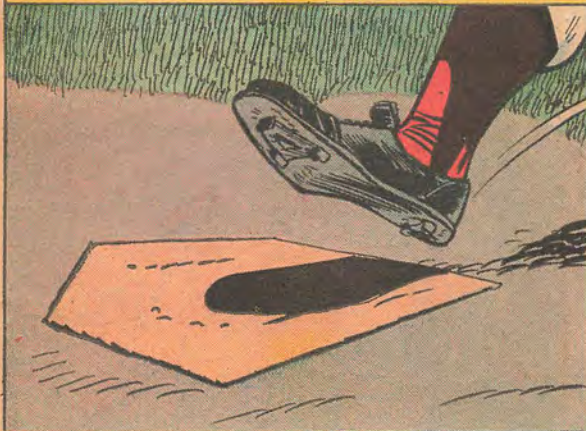
BOB CROSSES UP THE BARTLETT STRATEGY BY BUNTING THE FIRST PITCH. HE DIGS FOR FIRST AS CARTER HEADS FOR THE PLATE...



...THE CATCHER MOVES QUICKLY, PONCING ON THE BALL, FLINGING IT TO FIRST...



THE SURPRISE BUNT SCORES TIM CARTER WITH THE WINNING RUN. MILFORD HAS WON THE PENANT AND THE COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP!



THE DELIRIOUS FANS POUR FROM THE STANDS.



TERRIFIC PLAY, SON. YOU'VE GOT REAL BASEBALL BRAINS!

GIVE COACH THORP THE CREDIT. HE TAUGHT ME HOW TO BUNT AND CALLED THE PLAY. DAD, HE'S BEEN RIGHT ALL ALONG.



YOU MUST BE A GREAT COACH, THORP. NOT ONLY DID YOU TEACH BOB HOW TO BUNT, SOMETHING I COULD NEVER DO, BUT YOU TAUGHT BOTH HE AND ME TO ACT AS MEN SHOULD. I THANK YOU!

YOU'VE GOT A FINE SON, MR. BURWELL. HE REFLECTS CREDIT ON YOU.



THREE DAYS PRIOR TO THE STATE CHAMPIONSHIP, BOB IS RETURNING HOME AFTER THE MOVIES WITH A COUPLE OF TEAMMATES. AFTER BIDDING THEM GOODNIGHT, HE INCREASES HIS PACE SO AS TO BE HOME BEFORE CURFEW. HE PAYS NO ATTENTION TO THE PARKED CAR.



HEY, KID! YA DON'T HAPPEN TO HAVE A MATCH, DO YA?

SORRY, I DON'T SMOKE.



SA-AY, YOU'RE BOB BURWELL, AIN'T YA? WE SAW YA PLAY IN THE COUNTY PLAYOFF. YOU'RE OKAY. HEY, TONY, IT'S THAT BURWELL KID WHAT MADE THAT GREAT BUNT FOR MILFORD.

YEAH, I RECOGNIZE HIM. LEMME HAVE YA AUTOGRAPH, KID. I GOT PAPER RIGHT HERE.



YA THINK MILFORD IS GONNA WIN THE STATE CHAMPIONSHIP, KID?

I THINK SO, ANYWAY, WE'LL TRY REAL HARD.

MAYBE YA SHOULDN'T TRY SO HARD. MAYBE YA SHOULDN'T TRY AT ALL.



I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

MY FRIEND MEANS...IF MILFORD LOST...HIM AND ME...WE'D MAKE A LOTTA DOUGH. YA GET IT? WE'RE BETTIN' ON BELLECLAIRE HIGH.

AND WE WOULD LIKE TO INSURE OUR BET. THERE'S A GOOD PIECE O' CHANGE IN IT FOR YA, KID. WHATAYA SAY? HERE'S A CHANCE FOR YA TO GET RICH AND NOBODY'S ANY THE SMARTER.

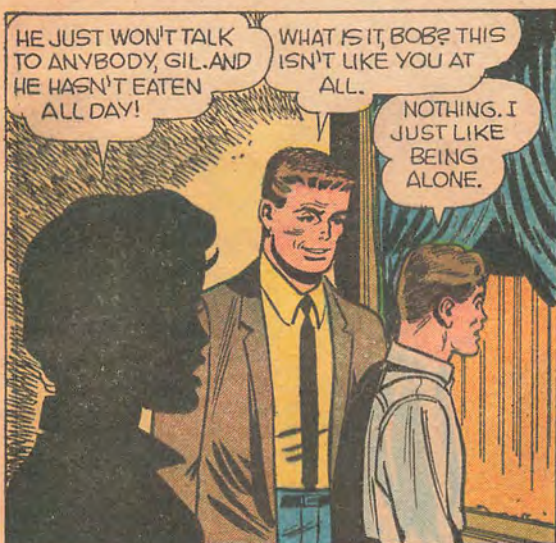


YOU GUYS MUST BE CRAZY. THE TEAM DEPENDS ON ME.

THAT'S JUST IT, KID. WITHOUT THE GREAT BURWELL, MILFORD'S JUST ANOTHER BALL CLUB. WITH YA, IT'S A WINNER.

GET WISE, KID. Y'AIN'T GOT NO CHOICE. A COUPLE O' ERRORS, A STRIKEOUT IN THE RIGHT PLACE AND YER RICH. MAYBE FIVE GRAND. AN' IF YA DON'T PLAY BALL WITH US YOU DON'T PLAY WITH NOBODY...





AFTER INFORMING MR. BURWELL OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED, GIL PHONES CHIEF OF POLICE McMILLAN. HE HURRIES TO THE BURWELL HOME.

WHEN THE PHONE CALL COMES, BOB, YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO. AGREE TO WHATEVER ARRANGEMENTS THEY HAVE MADE. WE'LL TAKE OVER FROM THERE.

I DON'T WANT MY SON OR DAUGHTER PUT IN ANY DANGER.

I WANT TO BE A PART OF THIS, CHIEF.



SUDDENLY, THE TELEPHONE RINGS.

YES, THIS IS BOB BURWELL. YES, I RECOGNIZE YOUR VOICE. ALL RIGHT, I'LL DO IT FOR FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS. BUT I WANT IT IN ADVANCE. ALL RIGHT, I'LL BE THERE. YES, I'LL COME ALONE.



WHAT DID THEY SAY, SON?

I'M TO GO OUT TO THE RIVER ROAD, PAST THE OLD COLLINS MANSION. THEY'LL COME BY WITH THE MONEY. THEY SAID IF I DOUBLE-CROSSED THEM, THEY'D KILL KATHY.



IT'S UP TO YOU, KATHY, WHETHER OR NOT WE GO THROUGH WITH THIS. YOU DON'T HAVE TO MAKE YOURSELF A TARGET.

I'M SCARED BUT, I STILL WANT TO SEE IT THROUGH TO THE END. THERE'S NO OTHER WAY.

GOOD GIRL! NOW, BOB, HERE'S WHAT I WANT YOU TO DO.



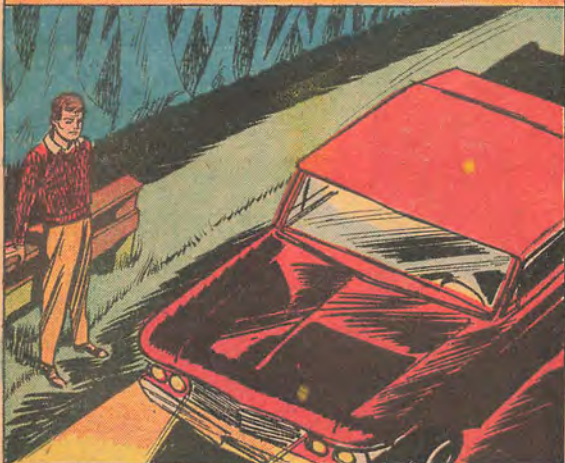
AN HOUR LATER, BOB STANDS ALONE ON THE RIVER ROAD WAITING...



AND WAITING BACK IN THE WOODS...



SUDDENLY OUT OF THE DARK STRETCH OF ROAD
A CAR APPEARS . IT SKIDS TO A STOP...



OKAY, KID. YER HERE AN' THAT'S GOOD. IF YA
DOUBLE-CROSSED US WE'LL USE THESE
LITTLE TOYS.

GIVE 'IM THE DOUGH, MIKE, AND
LET'S BEAT IT. WE STILL GOT A
LOT O' BETS TO PLACE!



AT THAT MOMENT, GIL LEADS THE
CHIEF AND MR. BURWELL OUT
OF THEIR HIDING PLACE. IN THE
MOONLIGHT, THE GAMBLERS
ARE CLEAR TARGETS.

GET THEM
NOW!

DROP THOSE GUNS!
YOU'RE UNDER
ARREST!



THE STATE CHAMPIONSHIP! MILFORD VERSUS BELLECLAIRE!

THIS IS THE BIG ONE!
WE'VE COME A LONG
WAY THIS
SEASON!

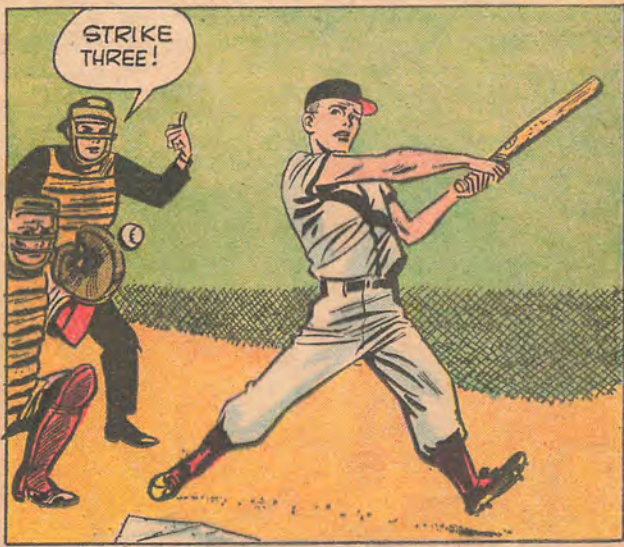
WIN OR LOSE, GIL, YOU'VE
DONE A REMARKABLE
JOB. YOU'RE TO BE
CONGRATULATED!

PLAY
BALL!



THE FIRST FOUR INNINGS ARE SCORELESS.
IN THE FIFTH, WITH THE SCORE TIED, THE BEL-
LECLAIRE CENTERFIELDER HITS A HOME RUN
WITH A MAN ON. THE MILFORD PLAYERS ARE
DISHEARTENED WHEN THEY RETURN TO
THE BENCH.

ALL RIGHT, WE'RE TWO RUNS DOWN. WE'VE
BEEN BEHIND BEFORE AND WE'VE COME ON
TO WIN. LET'S DO IT ONE MORE TIME!



VER OUT! SIDE'S
RETIRED!

THE BELLECLAIRE
PITCHER SEEMS UN-
BEATABLE AND THE MILFORD
PITCHER PERMITS NO
FURTHER SCORING.



SUDDENLY, IT IS THE LAST OF THE NINTH, WITH THE
SCORE STILL 2 TO 0. MILFORD'S LEADOFF MAN BEAT
OUT A SCRATCH HIT, THE NEXT BATTER STRIKES
OUT. THEN TIM CARTER BUNT'S AND WITH A GREAT
BURST OF SPEED, IS SAFE. THE CROWD ROARS ...



BUT THE NEXT MAN IS AN EASY OUT...

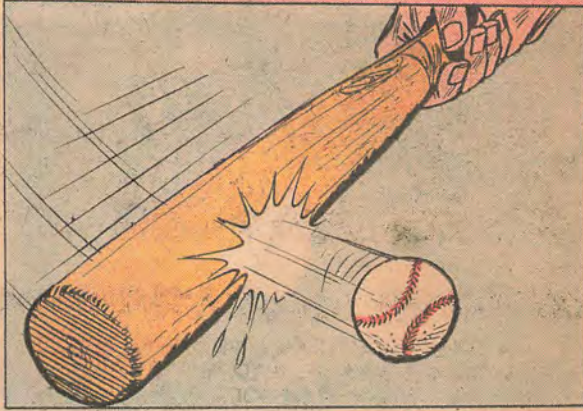
IT IS ALL UP TO BOB BURWELL...

MAYBE YOU OUGHT TO PINCH HIT FOR ME... I HAVEN'T DONE A THING ALL DAY!

I KNOW YOU CAN DO IT, BOB. YOU'VE BEEN DROPPING YOUR SHOULDER AND BOBBING YOUR HEAD WHEN YOU SWING. KEEP IT LEVEL, HEAD DOWN, EYES ON THE BALL. FOLLOW THROUGH. SWING AT THE FIRST GOOD PITCH.



BOB GOES AFTER THE FIRST PITCH. THE CRACK OF THE BAT AGAINST BALL PIERCES THE AIR LIKE A KNIFE. THE RUNNERS START MOVING! THE LEFT FIELDER PUTS HIS HEAD DOWN AND RACES BACK TOWARD THE FENCE...



IT'S GOING!

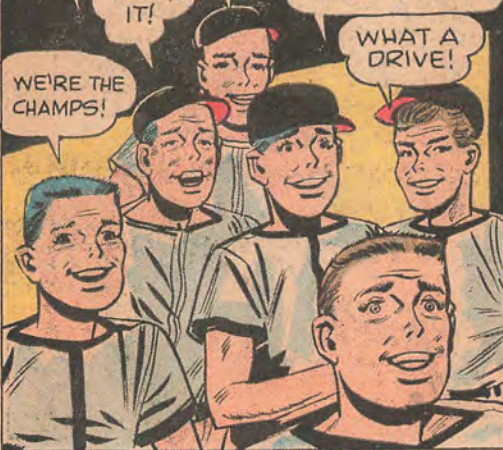
A HOME RUN!

MILFORD WINS THE STATE CHAMPIONSHIP!

HE DID IT!

WHAT A DRIVE!

WE'RE THE CHAMPS!



WHATAMAN BURWELL!

BEST PLAYER MILFORD EVER HAD!

HE'LL HAVE TO FIGHT THE SCOUTS OFF AFTER THIS!



YOU MADE IT ALL POSSIBLE, COACH. I'D NEVER HAVE HIT THAT HOMER IF YOU HADN'T STRAIGHTENED OUT MY STANCE!

YOU'RE A FINE PLAYER, BOB. YOU'LL HAVE AN OUTSTANDING CAREER IN THE MAJORS.

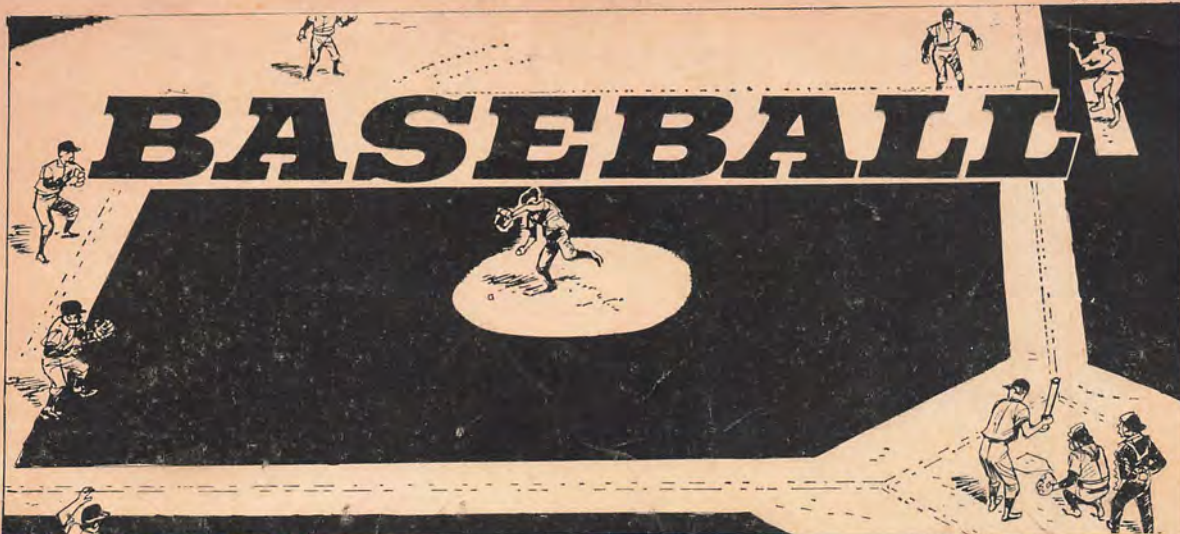


AND LATER THAT EVENING...

NOW, PERHAPS YOU'LL BE ABLE TO PAY ATTENTION TO ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE BURWELL FAMILY!

WHOM DO YOU HAVE IN MIND?





A FORM OF BASEBALL, PROBABLY DERIVED FROM THE ENGLISH GAMES OF CRICKET AND ROUNDELS, WAS PLAYED IN THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY, AND THE CHILDREN'S GAME "ONE OLD CAT" EXISTED BEFORE THAT. BASEBALL WAS PLAYED LARGELY IN THE NORTHEASTERN STATES PRIOR TO THE CIVIL WAR; AND ALEXANDER CARTWRIGHT AND HENRY CHADWICK WERE KEY FIGURES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GAME. THE REPORT OF A COMMISSION WHICH DECLARES THAT ABNER DOUBLEDAY CREATED THE MODERN GAME IN 1839 AT COOPERSTOWN, SITE OF THE BASEBALL HALL OF FAME, HAS BEEN HOTLY CONTRADICTED.

THE EARLIEST GAME ON RECORD WAS THAT OF JUNE 19, 1846, IN HOBOKEN, N.J., WHERE THE "NEW YORK NINE" DEFEATED THE "KNICKERBOCKERS" 23 TO 1 IN FOUR INNINGS. THE EARLIEST PROFESSIONAL TEAM TO BE SPONSORED WAS THE CINCINNATI "RED STOCKINGS" IN 1869. SINCE 1903, THE PENNANT WINNER IN EACH MAJOR LEAGUE... NATIONAL AND AMERICAN... HAS MET IN AN ANNUAL PLAYOFF, THE "WORLD SERIES," TO DECIDE THE CHAMPIONSHIP. JUDGE KENESAW MOUNTAIN LANDIS WAS THE FIRST HIGH COMMISSIONER OF BASEBALL... A POSITION NOW HELD BY FORD FRICK, A FORMER NEWSPAPERMAN.

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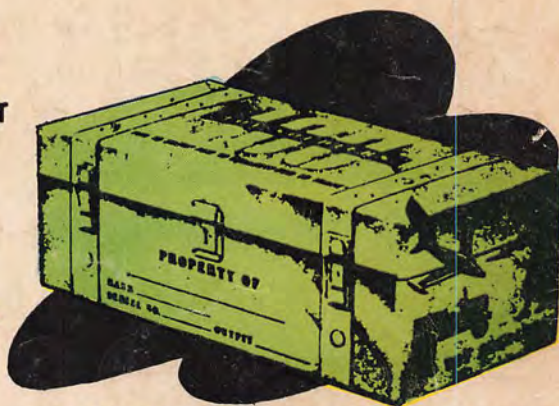


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